

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council

July 14, 2023

Agenda Item 5a

Potential Regional Transportation Measure: Proposed Goals, Principles, and Priorities

Subject:

Update on the potential 2026 regional transportation ballot measure, including draft goals, principles, priorities, and next steps for public engagement.

Background:

In January 2023, staff updated the Policy Advisory Council and the Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee on early efforts to engage stakeholders related to a potential regional transportation ballot measure slated for 2026. This was the first step in a process that sought to identify an expenditure plan concept and potential revenue source(s) by the end of 2023 to pursue enabling legislation in 2024, consistent with recommendations featured in Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Transit Transformation Action Plan. Since then, staff has completed public polling on Bay Area voters' priorities concerning transportation and re-convened with key stakeholders in advance of anticipated public engagement starting later this month.

Recent action on the state level to provide near-term transit operating assistance is a critical first step to averting the transit fiscal cliff. However, significant additional financial resources will be required over the medium to long-term to position our region's transit systems on a stable financial footing for the years and decades ahead. Furthermore, complementary investments to transform transit for the post-pandemic era and improve mobility and access to key destinations through other transportation improvements also require new revenues to realize.

Draft Goals and Focus Areas:

A potential 2026 regional transportation ballot measure should not be considered in isolation from the many actions being taken at the regional and local level to implement our adopted long-range plan, Plan Bay Area 2050. Instead, a regional transportation funding measure is one component of a suite of strategies to address the Plan's goals, including securing new funding for affordable housing through the planned Bay Area Housing Finance Authority's affordable housing bond in 2024, encouraging denser land use policies around station areas, supporting local action to protect vulnerable communities from climate change, and much more. In that

vein, staff recommends that the measure advance the Plan's five broadly supported goals to realize a more **affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant region for all**. Based on feedback from our stakeholder engagement to date, staff identified three focus areas aligned with the Plan's vision that the measure could help to accelerate: **stabilize transit funding; make transit faster, safer, and easier to use; and enhance mobility and access for all**. These three focus areas had broad support from all stakeholder groups we met, with more significant divergence emerging regarding the extent to which each should be prioritized.

Draft Guiding Principles:

Before crafting an expenditure plan that could advance this vision, staff recommends also identifying guiding principles that should be kept in focus for the entirety of the expenditure plan development process but also specific line items. Four guiding principles are suggested below to evaluate expenditure plan concepts to ensure regional goals are being actively advanced throughout:

- The expenditure plan and each category of funding should be **equitable** insofar that funding should be prioritized toward providing benefits to residents of Equity Priority Communities and other marginalized groups, such as older adults and persons with disabilities.
- The expenditure plan and each funding category should be **climate-friendly**, insofar that only greenhouse gas (GHG) -reducing or GHG-neutral projects should be funded.
- The expenditure plan should be **adaptable**, recognizing the region's future remains highly uncertain.
- The expenditure plan should be **cohesive**, enabling a measure that both maximizes regional impact and is easy to communicate to the public.

Draft Expenditure Priorities:

Based on stakeholder input and public polling, staff recommends moving forward developing an expenditure plan that positions sustaining transit operations as a high priority while also integrating other categories of investments necessary to advance regional goals. While the share of investment in transit operations relative to other priorities remains a topic for further exploration this fall as transportation revenue forecasts come into focus, four other complementary expenditure categories are also being explored as documented in Attachment A.

Next Steps:

Staff seeks feedback from the Policy Advisory Council on the draft goals, principles, and priorities for the potential transportation ballot measure. Further refinements will be made this summer based on feedback received through the public engagement process. Staff will then return to the Council to share the proposed goals and principles for the ballot measure, with time to refine funding levels, expenditure priorities, and potential revenue source(s) later in the fall. This timeline should enable MTC to work with legislators in Sacramento to advance authorizing legislation in 2024 that incorporates feedback received this year.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Expenditure Priorities Under Consideration
- Attachment B: PowerPoint

Draft Expenditure Priorities Under Consideration

Category	Description	Examples of Eligible Investments <u>(not intended to be exhaustive)</u>	Equity & Climate Considerations
<p>Transit Operations</p>	<p>Sustain and/or expand transit service levels on existing bus, rail, and ferry lines to serve both current and future riders.</p> <p><i>Further analysis of the long-term transit operating needs will be available this fall as part of the Plan Bay Area 2050+ process, enabling a better understanding of to what extent this measure could sustain existing levels and/or expand service frequencies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preservation of existing routes and frequencies - Increased frequencies and/or new routes to boost overall service levels - Network restructuring that leads to net increase in transit service-hours 	<p>Priority could be given toward preserving existing service levels and/or enhancing service frequencies on transit lines that benefit residents in Equity Priority Communities or that primarily serve underserved demographic groups.</p> <p><i>Investments related to transit operations are anticipated to all be GHG-reducing.</i></p>

Category	Description	Examples of Eligible Investments <u>(not intended to be exhaustive)</u>	Equity & Climate Considerations
Transit Transformation	<p>Accelerate investments to improve the customer experience, such as transit fare integration, harmonized mapping & wayfinding, ambassador programs, expanded paratransit services, etc.</p> <p><i>This would include implementation of Transit Transformation Action Plan priorities, as well as complementary investments to grow ridership as identified in Transit 2050+.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplified and standardized fare programs & discounts - Improved signage at stations and bus stops - Transit priority infrastructure (signal priority, bus lanes for rapid/BRT, etc.) - Community ambassadors, improved lighting & security cameras - Paratransit service expansion to enable "one-seat rides" - Shuttles or other flexible mobility options accommodating all users - Bikeshare subsidies & system expansion 	<p>Priority could be given toward programmatic investments on transit lines or at transit stops/stations that benefit residents in Equity Priority Communities or that primarily serve underserved demographic groups.</p> <p><i>Investments related to transit transformation are anticipated to all be GHG-reducing.</i></p>

Category	Description	Examples of Eligible Investments <u>(not intended to be exhaustive)</u>	Equity & Climate Considerations
Main Streets	<p>Transform arterials and collectors to better address safety, equity, and climate goals through improved pavement, safety enhancements, expanded sidewalks and/or protected bicycle infrastructure.</p> <p><i>This would encourage advancement of multi-benefit projects – both to encourage walking and biking for nearby trips and to enable first/last mile connections to transit – while also working to ensure geographic balance throughout the</i></p>	<p><i>Projects would ideally include two or more features to yield progress toward multiple goals concurrently, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street repaving projects - Buffered or protected bike lanes - Expanded sidewalks and/or bulb-outs - Parallel multimodal trails - Traffic calming features - Green infrastructure elements 	<p>Priority could be given toward road improvements or street redesigns located within an Equity Priority Community, contingent upon a robust community engagement process to engage local residents.</p> <p><i>As investments in this category are not anticipated to include additional roadway capacity, this category is anticipated to be a mix of GHG-neutral and GHG-reducing projects.</i></p>

Category	Description	Examples of Eligible Investments <u>(not intended to be exhaustive)</u>	Equity & Climate Considerations
	<i>diverse nine-county region.</i>		
Climate Resilience	<p>Fund planning, design and/or construction activities that benefit transportation infrastructure and nearby communities by protecting them from rising sea levels.</p> <p><i>While funding would likely not be sufficient to advance climate resilience megaprojects, funding could allow the region to build up a pipeline of future investments to better compete for state or federal funding in the years ahead.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local or subcounty resilience plans to refine future pipeline of projects - Design and environmental analyses for future sea level rise resilience projects - Implementation of specific sea level rise resilience projects, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Levees & horizontal levees o Infrastructure elevation o Tidal gates o Wetland restoration 	<p>Priority could be given toward resilience planning, design and/or construction activities in Equity Priority Communities or to protect transportation facilities primarily used by underserved demographic groups. Priority could also integrate the level of risk from near-term sea level rise impacts (1 foot versus 4 feet); any priority considerations would be contingent</p>

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			<p>upon a robust community engagement process to engage local residents.</p> <p><i>Investments related to transit transformation are anticipated to be primarily GHG-neutral.</i></p>
<p>Priority Projects</p>	<p>Close funding gaps for GHG-reducing or GHG-neutral projects being impacted by rapid inflation, accelerating delivery of high-priority voter-approved capital investments.</p> <p><i>This would help the region implement near-to-medium</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rail extensions in new communities - Rail grade separation & modernization - New ferry terminals - Carpool-to-express lane conversions - Highway interchange modernizations 	<p>Priority could be given toward projects that benefit residents in Equity Priority Communities or that primarily serve underserved demographic groups.</p> <p><i>Investments are primarily</i></p>

Category	Description	Examples of Eligible Investments <u>(not intended to be exhaustive)</u>	Equity & Climate Considerations
	<p><i>transportation investments already approved by voters but stalled due to increasing costs.</i></p>		<p><i>anticipated to be GHG-reducing (e.g., transit megaprojects), although select non-capacity-increasing highway investments such as HOV-to-Express Lane conversion projects or safety improvements at highway interchanges may be GHG-neutral.</i></p>